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# HOW TO MAKE PERFECT COFFEE

BY W. S. QUINBY



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# HOW TO MAKE PERFECT COFFEE

BY W. S. QUINBY

THERE is only one test you apply to the coffee you serve in your restaurant.

Do the people like it? Do they go away saying, "That was a delicious cup of coffee"?

Coffee is, after all, a very important part of a good meal. If the coffee is not good, patrons will get the feeling that something was wrong, something not quite up to standard.

On the other hand when the coffee is supremely good, it will impress itself strongly and bring patrons back to you, smiling in anticipation of a real treat.

We have all had the coffee crank say to us at some time or other, "Let's go around to Blank's for lunch. Did you ever try the coffee there? It's fine!"

The test of your coffee is whether you send coffee lovers away with a grin or a frown. And the secret of good coffee is all in one word—flavor.

## FLAVOR

FOR people who do not know coffee, the perfect flavor—the rich, real coffee flavor—is a hard thing to capture. But once you understand the nature of coffee, and get the right coffee—it becomes simple. Flavor depends on these two things.

The first thing you must have is quality in your coffee. It is not necessary to pay an extravagant price—but your coffee should be the product of experts. It should be selected from the finest types and kinds, and blended with a skill that brings out the genuine essence of each kind of coffee that goes into it. Then the blend must be roasted as carefully as the noted chef will prepare a sauce or a pudding. Modern coffee production has standardized the processes of the coffee factory, but quality itself is never standardized. Quality depends on men—and every coffee roaster will have a different standard.

The second thing of utmost importance to serving delicious coffee is the preparation.

There was an old Chinese philosopher who declared that, next to the spoiling of fine children by false education, the worst practice he knew was “the spoiling of fine tea by false manipulation.” To the Chinese, tea was a national institution. With us, coffee is a national institution, and the poor treatment our old friend coffee so often receives is really a shame.

Coffee making, in spite of its importance, is one of the things most neglected in every kitchen. The reason may be the very simplicity of making good coffee. In any case it is a responsibility that is often left to any ordinary



helper who is without intelligent training, and the result drives the true coffee lover to despair.

The brewing of your coffee almost ranks of first importance, because the finest coffee in the world will show an undesirable side if it is improperly brewed.

## THE PRINCIPLES OF COFFEE MAKING

THE fundamental necessary to making good coffee is to know the physical nature of coffee, and the action of coffee properties in contact with hot water. So you should not have coffee made by an employee who is ignorant of the properties of the coffee bean.

Starting out some twenty years ago in the coffee and tea business, the writer was imbued with the idea of quality—of producing a blend of coffee that could not be improved upon. But he has found that it is not enough for the importer and roaster to rigidly uphold the standard of his product. The true coffee merchant must go farther and give time and knowledge to helping the restaurant and hotel man to an understanding of the principles of coffee making.

The purpose of this booklet is to disseminate these principles in a form which can be quickly grasped by the coffee maker as well as those who direct him. It is the story of one man's experiences with the handling of coffee in many hundreds of restaurants and hotel kitchens.

## THE DOUBLE NATURE OF COFFEE

MANY good things we enjoy have to be carefully separated from the undesirable elements which nature mingles with them in the raw state. Coffee is one of these.

Coffee on the tree is a small red fruit, not unlike a cherry in appearance. Before the green bean reaches us there are several preparatory processes: the removal of the outer pulp, then of the inner shell and "silver skin"; the separating, washing and drying of the beans. Even after the hard, dry beans are roasted and cleaned, coffee is not yet reduced to the delicious essence which tastes so good in the cup. From this time on, however, the responsibility for securing the right flavor passes from the roaster to the coffee maker.

Now, all roasted coffee contains two elements. One of these elements produces the good, savory coffee taste which for centuries has been the delight of mankind. This is the element which we desire to extract in the greatest abundance. It is "flavor."

But coffee also contains another element—"bitterness." Many people think that we would get the perfect cup of coffee if we could extract the flavor in such a way that no bitterness at all would come with it. This is a mistake. A very small proportion of bitterness is not only unavoidable, but adds a certain essential quality to the taste. However, if too much bitterness gets in, it will make the drink unpalatable.

The following table shows the difference in actual "flavor" and "bitterness" content, when the coffee is made properly and when the job is done carelessly.

## PROPERLY MADE

Flavor, per cup .....	2.22 grains
Bitterness, per cup.....	.29 grains

## IMPROPERLY MADE

Flavor, per cup .....	1.75 grains
Bitterness, per cup.....	2.35 grains

The ideal cup of coffee, as shown above, should contain the smallest possible suggestion of bitterness, with all the flavor that can be extracted. By observing the proper care, we can get about the right proportion of both every time.

The nature of flavor and bitterness themselves help us to do this. Flavor is a lively element, quickly affected by boiling water, but never responsive to cool water. Bitterness, on the other hand, while slower to act, is comparatively indifferent to the temperature of the water. It will respond either to hot or cold water.

So if we should put ground coffee into luke-warm water, hardly any flavor would be extracted, but the analysis would show the presence of a large proportion of bitterness. Also if we should put ground coffee into boiling water, and *leave it there too long*, both the bitterness and the flavor would come out, but the bitterness in such quantities that it would completely overcome all good flavor.

There is obviously a middle ground, a way to get all the flavor and very little of the bitterness. And this, of course—bearing in mind the action of both—is to bring ground coffee in contact with boiling water, and thus ex-

tract the flavor, but not to leave them in contact long enough for too much bitterness to be extracted. And by "boiling water" I mean water that is actually bubbling at a gallop; that is 212 degrees hot. When water is only steaming it is not boiling. Water will always steam when warmer than the air.

In this way has been worked out the principle of *pouring* boiling water over the coffee, instead of boiling the coffee in the water. The pouring process is what is called filtration or "leaching" coffee, and is by far the best of any known ways to make it. Pour boiling water through the coffee? Why, that seems simple enough! Why are you making all this to-do about a small matter like that? Anybody can make good coffee if that is all there is to it!

Yes, it *is* simple. Anybody *can* do it. Then why is it that so large a percentage of our coffee is ruined in the making? It has long been a matter of wonder why it should be so hard to persuade coffee makers to follow the few simple rules that are necessary to brewing good coffee.

Human nature is a curious thing. It sometimes seems that by telling people how to do it wrong we would get better results. You have heard of the department store owner who had many exits to his store, but just one particular door through which he requested the ladies not to pass. Invariably they would go out that door. Then a happy thought struck him. He had a big sign painted over the door with the word "EXIT" upon it. After that he had no trouble. The shoppers didn't want to go out that way any more.

I am going to tell a few of my experiences with coffee

makers later on. But first let us establish the proper way to make coffee.

## ACCURACY AND CARE ESSENTIAL

AT the bottom of any system of coffee making the first requirement is accuracy. Leave nothing to guesswork or chance. Carefully measure your coffee and water each time the coffee is made; follow the same directions day after day, and at frequent intervals check up your weights and measures, inspect your urns, leach bags and other utensils, and thereby avoid the numberless accidents which produce poor coffee.

## THE LEACHING METHOD

THE standard leaching urn with a close mesh bag is the best to use. This method, by chemical test, shows the nearest perfect solution of coffee of any known way. In fact, properly leached coffee is almost bitter-free. Pressure urns and other patented methods have never yet produced results that can equal the ordinary leaching urn. As a rule other devices extract too much bitterness instead of the perfect balance of coffee properties. Methods of making coffee advertised to get strength with the use of a smaller quantity of coffee result in an excess of bitterness and lack of flavor. All experience proves that a gallon of water cannot be turned into properly flavored coffee with less than eight ounces of dry coffee. No method can possibly bring out more *because it is not there to be had*.

With the standard leaching urn use a fine ground coffee. Some advocate pulverized coffee, but our experience has shown that pulverized coffee, used in large quantities or during rush hours, is inclined to pack and mat and become unmanageable. Moreover, extreme fineness is no assurance of the best results. As a matter of fact, coarse ground coffee gives us the more flavory drinking quality, but requires the use of so much coffee per gallon that it becomes too expensive for practical use.

## RULES FOR MAKING COFFEE

### AMOUNT OF COFFEE TO USE

*For Hotels*—Use in proportion of ten to twelve ounces per gallon for breakfast and luncheon, according to the strength desired; and for after dinner, fourteen to sixteen ounces per gallon.

*For Restaurants*—Use in proportion of eight to nine ounces per gallon, except when making one or two gallons at one making, when at least ten ounces per gallon should be used.

### ORDER OF PROCEDURE

1. See that you have at hand correct amount of correctly weighed dry coffee.
2. Note grind of coffee.
3. See that you have a plentiful supply of *fresh* boiling water in hot water urn.
4. See that the gauge shows plenty of water in jacket of coffee urn and that it is at top temperature—i.e., practically boiling.

5. Look in coffee urn to see that it is in proper condition.
6. See that leaching bag is sweet, then put in urn.
7. Put correct amount dry coffee in leaching bag.
8. Note that water in the hot water urn is boiling—not only blowing off furiously, but that the water in gauge is moving up and down.
9. Heat hot water measure by rinsing with hot water.
10. Rapidly as possible draw correct number of measures of water and put through coffee, keeping urn cover down between measures of water and being careful not to pour water on fast enough to overrun top of bag in urn. If it overflows stop it by stirring with a spoon, never with cold water.
11. At once repour coffee, making sure measure is hot before drawing coffee into it. Repour entire making—i.e., if water is five gallons repour five gallons.
12. Rest five to ten minutes.
13. Repour at least 50% of the make.
14. Let ripen five to ten minutes.
15. Serve.
16. Remove the leach bag and coffee grounds fifteen to twenty minutes after coffee has been finished.

## WATER

Too much importance cannot be placed upon the kind of water used in making coffee. The following directions are vital and should be adhered to:

Use fresh water. Boil hard and use at once.

Don't use water out of jacket or from under urn.

Don't use water out of the *hot water system*.

Water becomes dead or stale even in a tight hot-water urn, and must be kept fresh by drawing all the water out of the urn every night.

### THE LEACH BAG

The leach bag must be of standard shape. If it runs to a peak the water will go out the sides instead of through the dry coffee.

The leach bag must be kept clean and sweet. Rinse in clean, *cold* water and never in warm or hot water. Keep it in cold, sweet water. Muddy or cloudy coffee is caused by the grounds getting into the coffee either by bubbling over the top of the bag and working under the ring, or because the mesh of the bag is too coarse. A fine mesh bag will prevent fine coffee grounds going through, but a double bag is better, if very clear coffee is desired. If the coffee starts to bubble over the top, stir quickly with a big spoon and let the air out. *Never use cold water* to stop it.

Remove the leach bag and coffee grounds fifteen minutes after the coffee is fully finished.

### CARE OF URNS

New urns must be well boiled out with coffee before using, to eliminate the taste of lead from the joints. Keep the urn clean, including the faucets, which gather grease fast. Scald and scour thoroughly once each day. Positively do not allow water in the jacket to leak into the urn. Look into the urn each day before making coffee, to see that no water has leaked in over night.

*Keep the water in the jacket of the urn at all times near the boiling point.* No coffee will hold its flavor ten minutes if



allowed to get cool, and all coffee is ruined if allowed to cool and then warmed up.

The urn and all utensils must be hot from start to finish. Urns with siphon attachments should be tested by gallon measure often; better still, measure all water with gallon measure. Siphon urns are, in fact, unreliable, because water will siphon at as low as 190 degrees, which is 22 degrees less than boiling point.

### CREAM

The following per cent fat is recommended in your cream:

18 to 20 per cent cream for coffee made eight ounces to a gallon.

22 to 25 per cent cream for coffee made nine to ten ounces.

30 per cent cream for coffee made twelve ounces and up.

Fresh cream is necessary—not just sweet, but fresh. You will be surprised to note how differently coffee will show when served with very fresh cream or when cream is nearly sour or chilled.

Have your cream tested for fat occasionally.

### SOME PERSONAL EXPERIENCES

MANY and varied have been the vicissitudes of the writer during a fifth of a century's activity trying to persuade coffee makers to stick to the rules. There are all sorts of haphazard methods and make-shift ways that one encounters. For example, in the matter of measurements, you will find the man or woman who uses "a cup of coffee to a pitcher of water." Sometimes when you ask how much

coffee and water they are using they will tell you that they do not know; but this sort of blunt honesty is rare. As a general rule the coffee maker insists that he has the right measurements, and only by making him go through the motions do you find out just where he has gone wrong.

## MISTAKES OF MEASUREMENT

**I** REMEMBER one case in the restaurant of one of our customers. I watched the coffee maker prepare a four-gallon quantity. He did the work well, measured everything properly, and when the coffee was finished it looked perfect. Then he drew a half gallon of water and turned it into the coffee.

"Why did you do that?" I asked.

"The coffee looked too strong to me," he replied.

Of course the result was a cup of coffee decidedly below the standard, and this illustrates how the personal whims and fancies of the coffee maker often result disastrously to the coffee. Many old-fashioned customs that are wholly erroneous are followed. For example, in one case I found the coffee maker putting salt into the dry coffee because his folks at home used to do it! Naturally the flavor was changed and not a true coffee flavor.

Then there was the case of the woman who, I found, was breaking eggs, yolks and all, into the dry coffee and mixing them together. When she put this mixture into the bag and poured on the boiling water you can imagine the sticky mass which resulted. The water could neither get through the caked-up bag nor reach the albumen-covered coffee. Why did she do it? Oh, because she had heard somewhere that it improved coffee to put eggs in it!\*

\* Eggs are of value only to help clarify.

To return to the matter of measurements, I must tell of one more case, because it is typical. Only recently in one of our fine restaurants I noticed that the coffee was not satisfactory, and had no particular snap. I called the proprietor's attention to it.

"Well," he asked, "what do you think is the trouble?"

I told him that, without looking into it, the flavor to me was that of coffee made with too little dry coffee for a gallon of water, but there might be other causes which would produce such a flavor. Before leaving I said:

"Won't you see that your boys are sticking to the schedule of weights?"

A day or two later I dropped in again. The coffee was still the same. The proprietor told me he had talked to the man.

"He is following weights," he continued, "and the boys are making coffee exactly according to the rules. It must be the coffee that is at fault. I am not satisfied myself, and was just going to send for you."

"Let's go down and see what the boys are doing," I suggested. He led the way to the storeroom and we questioned the man who had charge of weighing the coffee.

"Are you sure your weights are right?" I asked.

"Of course," he replied. "I'll show you."

This is the usual answer. Naturally employees do not readily admit that they are at fault. However, he picked up a can in which he had the right amount, put it on the scale, and put the weight opposite it with perfect confidence. The proprietor turned to me with one of those "I-told-you-so" glances. I asked:

“Do you put that can into the urn with the coffee?”

Then they both tumbled to the fact that the man had been including the weight of the can as though it were coffee. No further explanation was needed for the poor quality of the coffee.

Sometimes we get the wrong proportions of water and coffee through some cause that is hard to detect. I remember one day a hotel man said to me:

“Your last lot of coffee is not as good as usual, and I am going to send it back.”

After asking several questions I learned that the coffee became weak after standing for a while in the urn. We went to the urns, drew off some coffee, and watched it for a moment. Then I saw the water slowly rising in the bottom of the coffee jar and the trouble was apparent. The urn had been allowed to dry and the heat had burned the leather washer which connects the inner jar with the outer water jacket. The water was leaking in. Only one thing can cause liquid coffee to weaken by standing, and that is added water.

## THE QUESTION OF WATER

NEXT to careless measurements it is the temperature of the water that causes most trouble. There are three principal errors that the men make.

One is using stale water—water that has boiled too long. Another is taking hot water from the hot water pipes. Both of these practices will result in poor coffee. Water should be freshly boiled.

But *the most typical error is the use of water that is not*

*hot enough, that is not boiling.* Here is one instance that is very common:

A little while ago I visited a lunch room and found the coffee absolutely bad. I was surprised, because this lunch room had been in the habit of turning out particularly fine coffee. I called the manager's attention to it, and he admitted that it was far from being as good as usual. He asked me what I thought was the matter.

"Cold water," I replied.

"No," he said. "The water is boiling. Look at it steam."

He stepped up to the man who made the coffee.

"John," he asked, "was that water boiling when you made the coffee?"

"Yes, sir," said John, promptly. Did John ever say "no" under such circumstances?

I happened to have a thermometer with me, and on being tested the water proved to be less than 170 degrees. Water boils at 212 degrees. Then I illustrated the fact that water will steam whenever it is of higher temperature than the air.

While we are on this question of boiling water, let me point out the necessity of keeping all utensils hot. Boiling water will not stay hot enough, nor will hot, flavory coffee stay good if brought in contact with cold substances. Every article used—the water measure, the pot, the cups and saucers, should be made piping hot beforehand by scalding. The simplest trial will prove the importance of this. I was sitting at a hotel table a short while ago with the proprietor. The coffee had just been served.

"This coffee is good!" he remarked.

"Yes, it is good," I agreed. Five minutes later I asked him to try the coffee again. He did so.

"It is not so good, is it?" I asked.

"No, it is not. It has lost flavor."

"Well," I said, "there's a logical reason. This coffee was drawn in a cold cup, and the cup cooled the coffee so fast that, as you see, the flavor has gotten away from it."

## MISTREATING THE LEACH BAG

UNLESS the leach bag is handled properly it will cause ill-tasting coffee. Leach bags should be removed from the urn as soon as possible after the coffee is thoroughly made, or at least raised above the liquid coffee.

Leaving the bag in gives a poor cup of coffee, because too much bitterness is extracted. Another important thing is to have the leach bag the proper length. Standard leach bags are best, and long leaches are wrong, because they soak in the coffee after making, and because they cannot be removed easily from the urn. Also, a long narrow leach bag allows the water to escape through the side in place of going through the coffee grounds. The restaurant man who wishes to make three gallons of coffee should have a five-gallon urn. By this arrangement the coffee maker has no trouble removing his leach bag promptly at the proper time; and you have the capacity if you want it.

The cleansing of leach bags also demands special care. They should be cleansed in just one way—rinsed thoroughly in cold water and placed in a pan of cold water where they will keep sweet until used again. Some restaurant men are very careful to wash out the leach bags in

boiling water, sometimes even adding a little lye to the water. Then they hang them up over the range to dry, where they catch all the wandering aromas in the air! This method is wrong. The boiling and drying process tends to set the grease, and to sour and rot the bag.

A cloth leach bag is the only kind to use. Paper leaches are unreliable. One customer told us that our coffee was bitter, and explained that he had tried cutting down the quantity per gallon, but while it was not so bitter it was not good. On investigation I found that he had completely changed his process of making coffee by putting a paper leacher in place of the cloth one. What really happened was that by his new process the water had gone through the paper so slowly that it had extracted too large a percentage of bitterness.

## CLEAN FAUCETS ESSENTIAL

A GREASY faucet, like a greasy leach bag, will ruin the coffee. I was called out once to look into a case of bad tasting coffee. I examined the urn and found it perfectly clean. The coffee was properly ground, and the cream, on being tested, was fresh and sweet. I had the regular coffee maker make the coffee, watching his measurements carefully. There was nothing wrong anywhere, apparently. At the proper time after making I tasted the coffee. It certainly had a peculiar flavor. Then I noticed, while he was drawing the cup, that the coffee came too slowly out of the faucet. I had the coffee drawn out and the faucets removed, and found that they were practically stopped up by a greasy sediment, which had probably long

been gathering there. As soon as the faucets and pipe were cleaned the trouble was ended.

## CREAM MUST BE RIGHT

THE importance of good cream cannot be over-estimated. Cream should not only be sweet, but really fresh, or it will make a big difference in the flavor. Also, care should be taken to have the right amount of cream for the strength of the coffee you are making. A typical experience was one I had not long ago in a restaurant serving one ounce of 20 per cent cream to a cup. It produced a dark cup of coffee, as there was not enough cream to color the coffee properly. The cream dispenser would drop only one ounce of cream and there was no way of adjusting it. With 1½ ounces we found we had a fine cup of coffee, and I persuaded the restaurant man to order a new faucet which would drop an ounce and a half.

## THE MILL MUST BE WATCHED

ONE final word about grinding. I was one day called to Providence, R. I., in a hurry by an important customer, who stated our coffee was decidedly off. I reached Providence in time for the lunch hour, and watched the making of the coffee very carefully. Still the result was bad. I questioned the maker on all points. His answers were very satisfactory. I asked him for some of his dry coffee, and I found the grind at least two degrees too coarse. He persisted that his mill had not been shifted, but still it was turning out coarse coffee. Why did it do



So important do we regard the La Touraine Formula, which embodies this ideal, that we guard it as a precious secret. Only a handful of men actually know what the secret of La Touraine goodness consists in. In general terms, however, it may be said to consist in three things rigidly adhered to:

First: securing the finest types of certain special kinds of coffee from the very best crops the world produces.

Second: combining these coffees to a carefully worked out blend which brings out the peculiar goodness of each kind.

Third: roasting them to a certain degree to extract the full coffee richness, which produces the finest flavor of which the blend is capable.

From the care implied here, it may be seen that for every process in the production of La Touraine, not only skilled men, but life-long coffee experts are required.

## SELECTION

AS is well known, a more careful standard of coffee production has always prevailed among Boston roasters than in other cities of the country. The first companies engaged in the importation of coffee in Boston easily ranked highest in quality. To a great extent this has been because in other coffee centers the buyers were often satisfied to judge the coffee in the green bean entirely, and neglect the cup-testing process.

The coffees that compose La Touraine are not only chosen with microscopic exactness, but rigidly undergo the

cup-test for actual drinking qualities, which cannot be determined merely from the appearance of the bean.

We select the lots of coffee for their uniformity and density. The last named quality is very important. It is the density and firmness of texture which give richness in drinking, and assure the flavor that lingers on the palate. It is also largely the density or weight of the raw coffee which makes the cost vary. As in the case of hard woods, the firmer the fiber the higher the price. Cheap coffee is light and porous—or “punky.” It can be instantly detected by weighing in the hand in comparison with an equal bulk of high-grade coffee.

## THE SECRET BLEND

**A**FTER the selection and cup-testing of coffee comes the blending.

While every process in the growth and preparation of coffee for the market is of great importance to the ultimate quality obtained, experts lay the greatest stress on blending. It is in the factory laboratory, where the secret blend is daily watched and determined, that coffee production becomes truly a high art.

The different kinds of coffee possess subtle differences in flavor and grade only noticeable to the trained eye and taste. A single type of coffee may produce a liquid of exceptional body. Another may have a livelier flavor. Still another may have more aroma.

Any one of these coffees when roasted and brewed will result in an excellent cup. But by putting them together

in the proper proportion we obtain a *balanced* mingling of their qualities which is far finer than any of them alone.

In determining the standard of the several coffees which go into the blend, extremely close decisions—involving a difference in aggregate cost of thousands of dollars—are by no means a rare thing, the same watchful care being exercised day after day in the purchase of coffees for this most carefully guarded brand of coffee.

## ROASTING

NEXT in importance to the blending of the coffee is the roasting process. Many persons believe that when they make coffee for their tables from the beans which have been roasted and ground, they are really “cooking” the coffee. As a matter of fact, all the “cooking” that the coffee receives has previously been done in the heated revolving cylinders, or “roasting drums,” under the close personal supervision of a skilled roaster.

This roasting, in the better class of importers' establishments, where quality is the first consideration, is an intricate and vital process, requiring not only a thorough knowledge of coffee, but years of training in the handling of equipment, the exact modulation of the heat, and the precise moment when just the turn of color has been reached. Careless and mechanical methods in roasting cannot produce good coffee.

For this reason the roaster should not only be a coffee specialist, thoroughly versed in the types of coffee which go into his blend, but as much a full-fledged chef as any other master of the preparation of gastronomic delicacies.

He should have the "sixth sense," whereby the master baker knows exactly when his pastries are browned to a turn, for it is the roaster who really *cooks* the coffee, the preparation for the table merely extracting in solution the oils already released by heat in the revolving drums. The La Touraine roast is of just the right degree to bring out in this particular blend those rich flavors so pleasing to a lover of coffee.

## CLEANLINESS

**I**N addition to selecting the very best coffees and blending and roasting them perfectly, we make sure that only clean coffees go into La Touraine.

To this end the beans undergo scouring and winnowing processes before and after being roasted. Our sanitary and well lighted plant is equipped with up-to-date machinery for these various processes, and from the green bean to the packed carton the coffee is never touched by the human hand. The moment it is taken from the bags, it starts by means of a system of elevators and traveling buckets, on a single continuous round of the plant, from process to process, until it is automatically weighed into packages for shipment.

La Touraine, when it leaves our factory, is therefore guaranteed to be absolutely net weight pure coffee, thoroughly cleansed and free from any vestige of foreign material.

To sum up the reasons why La Touraine is the best coffee for you to use:—







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